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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0080
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 2991
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 7047
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 7251
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 6488
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 5156
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 7348
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4105
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2330
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 0983
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 8502
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 3514
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7487
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9573
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 2308
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 3410
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002819

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Mideast
2. Anti-Terrorism Efforts

Key stories in the media:

Major media reported that, following PM Benjamin Netanyahu's conversation with Kadima leader Tzipi Livni yesterday, Kadima is likely to reject his offer, spurring a possible split in Livni's

party. Media cited the pivotal role of Kadima Knesset Member Otniel Schneller, a former settler leader, in the possible move of Kadima MKs to Likud.

The media reported on the murder on Thursday in the West Bank of Rabbi Meir Avshalom Hai and the subsequent Saturday operation in Nablus that liquidated three Fatah terrorists who reportedly killed Hai. The Jerusalem Post reported that PM Netanyahu told his ministers yesterday that the killing of Hai by a terrorist who sat in an Israeli jail shows the difficulty of the Gilad Shalit deal. Yesterday Maariv reported that senior U.S. administration officials have demanded clarifications from Israel regarding the operation, arguing that the Palestinians have complained that Israel has liquidated innocent people. Various media reported that Fatah officials warned yesterday that the killing could trigger a third Intifada.

HaQaretz reported that former Justice Minister Yossi Beilin told the Meretz party leadership yesterday that the PM is close to finalizing an agreement with the U.S. administration for peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, lasting two years, that will discuss the Palestinian demand for borders based on the 1967 lines and will include an exchange of territory and suitable security arrangements. Beilin was quoted as saying that these are the terms of the agreement being hammered out between Netanyahu and the U.S. government on Israeli negotiations with the PA -- that Netanyahu is willing to agree that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will last for two years. The Prime Minister's Office was quoted as saying that Beilin's comments were "unfounded," adding that discussions were ongoing but no agreement has been reached. However, HaQaretz reported that when asked about Beilin's statements, a senior U.S. administration official said: "Things are moving in this direction, but the deal isn't done yet. There are several issues still outstanding." HaQaretz reported that Netanyahu leaves tomorrow for talks in Cairo and appears set to present the agreements to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren told the newspaper yesterday that President Obama has not exerted any real QphysicalQ pressure on Israel, nor does he see that as a goal.

The media quoted Avigdor Lieberman as saying that as long as he is foreign minister and his party Yisrael Beiteinu is in the government coalition, there could only be direct talks between Israel and Syria.

Media reported that the Ministry of Construction and Housing has issued a tender for building 692 housing units in East Jerusalem Qbehind the Green Line.Q Yediot reported that PM Netanyahu welcomed the move and that the U.S. was QupdatedQ about it. HaQaretz also reported that the state plans to confiscate Palestinian land around the veteran settlement of Ofra.

Yediot quoted Hamas sources in Lebanon as saying that Israel is behind the killing of two of its men in Beirut.

Leading media quoted police as saying that Police Commissioner David Cohen has received death threats over the last few days. Security sources believe the threats came from extreme right-wing activists, targeting Cohen because of his criticism of protesters breaking the law in demonstrations against the settlements construction freeze.

Yediot reported that Israel is likely to approve the establishment of a commission of inquiry into Operation Cast Lead.

Leading media noted the bad performance of ICTS, the Israeli-owned company in charge of security for Delta Flight 253 at AmsterdamQs Schiphol Airport.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano will arrive on Saturday for a visit.

1. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

QAnother Month, Another Year

Senior Middle East affairs analyst Zvi Bar'el wrote in the independent, left-Ha'aretz (12/287): QThe only achievements Barack Obama can claim on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are in extorting a declaration from Netanyahu that he is amenable to the two-state vision and a temporary and limited suspension of settlement construction. Nonetheless, without even noticing, we have entered the freeze's second month, and in less than nine months this perilous situation will pass us by. It looks as if Netanyahu will blithely clear this hurdle put up by the U.S. President without breaking a sweat. From the grand vision of a year ago only fragments remain within reach, fragments not even fit to appear on Obama's CV.... It's true, not even a year has passed since Obama entered the White House, but the rules have already been set. Circumventing Obama is no longer such a complex act. For a reasonable price, Washington can be sedated and all sides can buy themselves an everlasting conflict.

12. Anti-Terrorism Efforts:

Block Quotes:

1I. QThe FBI Has Fallen Asleep on Its Watch

Columnist Shmuel Rosner, who was HaQaretzQs correspondent in Washington, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (12/28): QThis would have been an insignificant had is not been evidence of an amazing routine. Shamai Leibowitz, an Israeli who has few good words to say about Israel, was arrested on suspicion of leaking confidential documents. He has been traveling around the U.S. for a few years, devoting time and energy to convince the Washington establishment that Israel is the guilty side in many of the MideastQs Q and the worldQs Q ills. Thanks to his name and heritage Q he is one of the many grandchildren of [the late strident anti-occupation] Yeshayahu Leibowitz Q he earned too much attention in Israel, too. This did not deter the FBI from recruiting him and signing him up on a special contract. His choice obliges one to assume that the organizationQs recruiters either abhor Israel and were looking for someone who would help them hate Israel or were simply negligent almost to the point of stupidity.... Only by chance did a slipshod terrorist try during the same period to blow-up the Beirut-bound Delta flight.... Once again it turns out that the U.S. services in charge of information gathering and terror prevention have not yet cleaned the plumbing that conveys them vital information from the Middle East.

II. QExpect Avoidable Delays

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (12/28): QOne way to reduce inconvenience and increase security at busy airports is by a greater use of profiling. Farouk Abdulmutallab should not have been free to try and blow up Northwest Airlines Flight 253 with 289 people on board over Detroit on Christmas Day.... In response to the Abdulmutallab affair, U.S. and European authorities are initiating more stringent and time-consuming searches of all passengers.... Rather than adding profiling to security procedures, thereby identifying possible Islamist terrorists -- protecting the rights of the many while infringing minimally on the rights of the very few -- all passengers will be subjected to unnecessary, sometimes painful, inconvenience. The alternative to profiling is requiring all passengers to go through whole-body imaging scanners that can reveal objects beneath a person's clothes. But these devices are pricy and raise all sorts

of civil liberties issues. Unless Western decision-makers reverse course, their adamant and misguided refusal to utilize profiling will senselessly subject millions of air passengers to a form of collective punishment.

CUNNINGHAM